

TIME CERTAIN  
REQUESTED (A.M.)

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 19, 2004

Division: BOCC

Bulk Item: Yes      No X

Department: DISTRICT 5

**AGENDA ITEM WORDING:** **Approval of the establishment of an Upper Keys Wastewater Pump-Out Vessel and Support System**

**ITEM BACKGROUND:** The concept of an Upper Keys pump out vessel and support system is widely accepted. The problem has reached the point where our Monroe County Sheriff's Office now receives calls from residents and taxpayers concerned about the increased number of moored vessels dumping raw sewage overboard and the sewage washing ashore on the next oncoming tide. Grant monies have been identified for a new pump-out vessel and for waste removal. Local marina operators have shown an interest in helping to solve these problems. John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park has committed to assist the county.

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:**

**CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:**

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**TOTAL COST:**                     

**BUDGETED:** Yes      No     

**COST TO COUNTY:**                     

**SOURCE OF FUNDS:**                     

**REVENUE PRODUCING:** Yes      No      **AMOUNT PER MONTH**      **Year**     

**APPROVED BY:** County Atty      OMB/Purchasing      Risk Management     

**DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL:**

*Murray E. Nelson*  
**MAYOR MURRAY E. NELSON**

**DOCUMENTATION:** Included x To Follow      Not Required     

**DISPOSITION:**                     

**AGENDA ITEM #** M3

# **Pump Out Vessel and Support System for the Upper Keys**

Presented  
*to*

**Monroe County Board of County Commissioners**

*by*

**Monroe County Sheriff's Department Sector 7 Zone 1  
Citizens Advisory Council**

May 19, 2004

# **Pump Out Vessel and Support System for the Upper Keys**

## **Introduction**

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The Monroe County Sheriff's Department Sector 7, Zone 1 Citizens Advisory Council is requesting that Monroe County address the need for a Pump-out Vessel and Support System in the Upper Keys. We are asking our County Commissioners to consider the recommendations brought before you by the Citizens Advisory Council and adopt a plan that will expedite a solution to this problem.

The Advisory Council is comprised of the Monroe County Sheriff's Department Zone Commander, Sgt. Lou Caputo, and seven volunteer members from the community living within the zone. Formed approximately five years ago, the purpose of the advisory council is to address public concerns for regulatory improvements, crime intervention and public safety. The advisory Council meets once a month and has been successful in assisting the community to address problems that arise in our local area.

## **Problem**

---

Since October 2003 the Advisory Council has primarily focused on Florida's No Discharge regulation and our near shore water quality. Representatives from several agencies visited the monthly meetings to discuss the issue and assist in identifying a solution to the problem of illegal raw sewage being discharged into the near shore waters of Monroe County. In the Upper Keys there is a growing population of live-aboard boaters. These boaters often live on vessels that no longer move or they stay at marinas where there are no pump-out facilities.

Identified sources include:

1. On an average there are 200 – 300 moored vessels in the near shore waters off Key Largo, with 70% of those recently contacted by an Inter-agency task force were found in violation of the No Discharge Zone established by the State of Florida on June 19, 2002; and
2. Insufficient pump-out facilities in the Upper Keys

## **Solutions**

---

The Advisory Council feels that the solution is three fold:

1. Education
2. Pump Out Vessel and Support System
3. Enforcement

George Garrett and Rich Jones from the Monroe County Department of Marine Resources attended several meetings. The exchange of information has been instrumental in helping the advisory council to identify solutions such as grant money that is available to install pump-out facilities or to purchase a vessel that can pump out holding tanks. The advisory council has been able to facilitate discussions with local marina owners and look for land based pump-out stations. Land based pump-out stations are part of the overall solution and are necessary to fulfill the needs for the requested pump-out vessel and proposed mooring fields around the island of Key Largo.

As a result of the advisory council's meetings a multi-agency task force formed together with the Monroe County Sheriff's Department that included the Department of Environmental Protection's Southeast District Bureau of Florida Park Police, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and FWC's Sanctuary Patrol. On February 28<sup>th</sup> the task force visited anchorages around the Upper Keys handing out education packets, checking sanitation devices and safety equipment.

Additionally the advisory council contacted Lisa Corey, Monroe County Public Outreach Coordinator on the No Discharge Zone and was able to connect her with local marina owners that expressed an interest in applying for grant money to install land based pump-out stations.

## Summary

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The concept of a Pump Out Vessel and Support System for the Upper Keys is widely accepted. The Advisory Council has received overwhelming support in the form of letters from bordering State and Federal Agencies that include Everglades National Park and John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. We have received letters from private citizens, homeowners associations, community crime watch groups and private marinas as well as Resolutions from both the Sanctuary Advisory Council and the Monroe County Marine and Port Advisory Committee.

The issue is not new, however the problem is growing faster than we are finding a solution. We urge our County Representatives to move forward with a solution to this problem.

# Pump Out Vessel and Support System for the Upper Keys



Pump Out Vessel

## MONROE COUNTY DEPARTMENT

- Marine Resources
- Public Works
- Other ☐ ☐

**SUBCONTRACT** – All or Part responsibility for Pump Out Vessel



## START UP COSTS

- Vessel (Grant Money) estimated size-28ft
- Trailer (Grant Money?)
- Tow vehicle
  - New (Grant Money?)
  - Utilize an existing Monroe County Fleet vehicle



## ONGOING COSTS & OVERHEAD

- Administration
- Insurance
- Maintenance
- Fuel  
(75% covered by Grant Money)
- Others

Possible funding sources:  
• fee on Vessel Registration  
• pump out fee  
• coordination with other government entities



## QUALIFIED OPERATOR

- Utilize current county employees
- Full-time dedicated position



## **Support System**

### **STORAGE & LAUNCHING LOCATION(s)**

Interagency and/or Private cooperation

*Management at the following locations have shown support:*

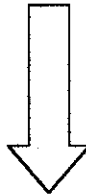
- Mangrove Marina (Bayside) MM 91.5
- Behind Mrs. Mac's Kitchen (Bayside) MM 99.5
- John Pennekamp State Park (Oceanside) MM 102.6



### **PUMP OUT STATIONS (Land Based)**

(Grants available for start-up)

- Existing locations:
  - John Pennekamp State Park
  - Mangrove Marina



### **MOORING FIELDS**

- Monroe County Department of Marine Resources is currently working on surveys for Upper Keys anchorages. A Pump Out Vessel is a related solution to the needs of moored vessels.

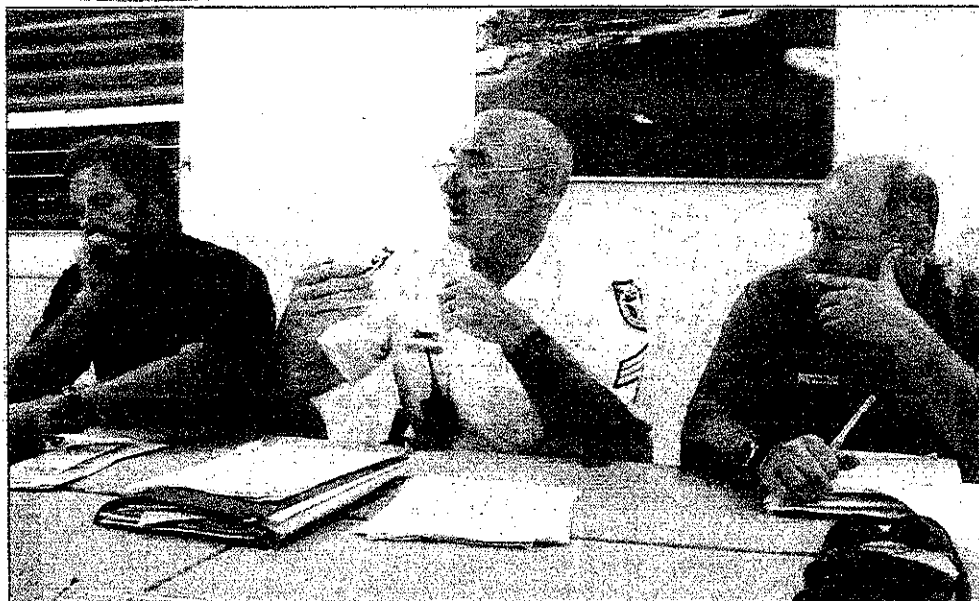
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# KEY LARGO Press

Wednesday, April 7, 2004

Volume 17, Number 29 ♦ 72 pages



STEVE GIBBS/Free Press

Monroe County Sheriff's Sgt. Lou Caputo, center, talks with local agencies and the public about providing pump-out service to live-aboards. George Garrett, left, Monroe County director of Marine Services, and Dan Kimball, acting superintendent of Everglades National Park participate.

## Group hashes out pump-out plan

BY STEVE GIBBS

Free Press Staff Writer

**KEY LARGO** — Sgt. Lou Caputo is good at getting people together for important causes.

Last Monday, March 29, he brought to the same table high-ranking members of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Everglades National Park, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, members of the public and members of his little-known Zone 1 Upper Keys Advisory Group.

Caputo's group, spawned from the Smart Cop Program five years ago, has met continuously in an effort to solve community issues that run the gamut from getting a pump-out boat for local anchorages and marinas to finding a safe place for local teens to gather.

Col. Rick Ramsey, the Monroe County Under Sheriff, was on hand to present community service awards to five of the advisory group: Jill Patterson, Alice Allen, Chris Gardner, Rob Cook and Brenda Altmeier.

"This is the only group like this in the county. You have met faithfully and continuously to try and solve community prob-

lems," Ramsey said.

Then they got down to business, discussing with Monroe County's director of Marine Resources, George Garrett, the possibility of getting a county-sponsored pump-out boat to service boaters who drop the hook at anchorages offshore from Key Largo and Tavernier.

"It's really fairly easy," Garrett said. "Grants are not that hard to get, but there are no grants that cover the cost of operating the vessel."

Paying a captain, insuring the boat, providing fuel and maintenance, all are vital and costly aspects that must be addressed in order to make the program successful.

On Wednesday, April 7, Caputo was to meet with the Marine Port Advisory Committee in Marathon with the hopes of getting that group to align with the pump-out boat proposal.

"We're looking for a boat between 25- and 28-feet in length, small enough to be moved on a trailer from one launch site to another," Caputo said. "It should have about a 450-gallon holding tank capacity."

Dan Kimball, acting director

of the Everglades National Park, asked for indulgence since he was only five weeks on the job. He did, however, offer the limited support his agency could provide.

The park boundaries stretch throughout Florida Bay to just offshore of the Upper Keys.

"We've got to work together to protect this bay," he said.

The owner of Mangrove Marina in Tavernier, Bernie Childs, had been invited to the meeting. Caputo said Childs has volunteered space in his marina for the pump-out boat.

Caputo pointed out that a grant could cover up to 75 percent of the cost of waste disposal.

Bob Bodner, assistant manager of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, said his park has a free pump-out station, and a pump-out boat would be able to offload effluent there.

With Garrett taking the lead on grant acquisition — "maybe we can get away with multiple grants," he said — a target date has been unofficially set.

"The end of the year is a safe speculation as to a time line for getting a boat on the water," Garrett said.

sgibbs@keysnews.com

## Law enforcement operation targets boating safety, sanitation

A law enforcement operation targeting boating safety and sanitation served to educate the boating public Saturday, Feb. 28, and served as a warning to some who were caught violating the law.

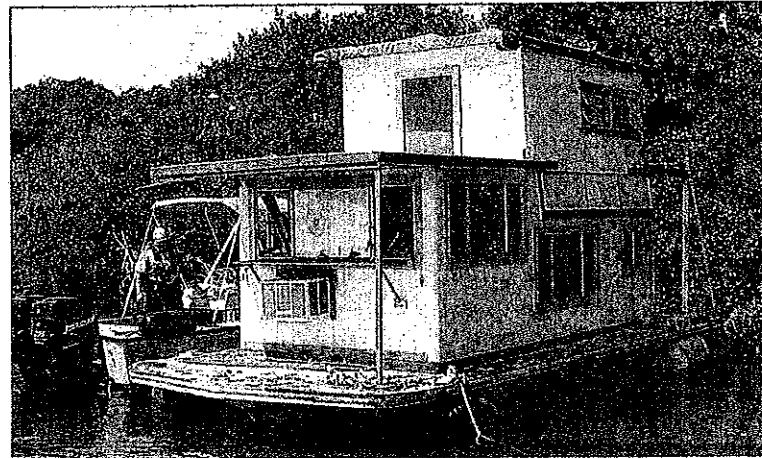
The Monroe County Sheriff's Office said an advisory group of citizens in the Upper Keys recommended the operation take place. Members of the Sector 7, Zone 1 group, who live in the Tavernier area, said they feel boating safety and sanitation is an issue that needs to be targeted by law enforcement. Monroe

County Sheriff's Sergeant Lou Caputo, who is the zone commander for that area, decided to set up an educational effort with other agencies to address the problem.

On Saturday at 9 a.m., officers from the Park Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Sanctuary and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office boarded seven boats and began an effort to contact as many boaters as they could to check for violations, and to hand out educational material. By 2 p.m., they had contacted 70 boat own-

ers between Jewfish Creek and Tavernier Creek, on both the ocean side and bay side of the Upper Keys.

Of the 70 boats checked, the group handed out 13 warnings and 11 citations. One person was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. The citations were almost exclusively handed out to boats that were pumping waste directly into the water without any sanitation equipment at all. All the boats were given a packet of information in a waterproof bag.



Contributed

Officers check safety equipment and sanitation on a houseboat moored off of a mangrove island on the bay side of the Upper Keys.



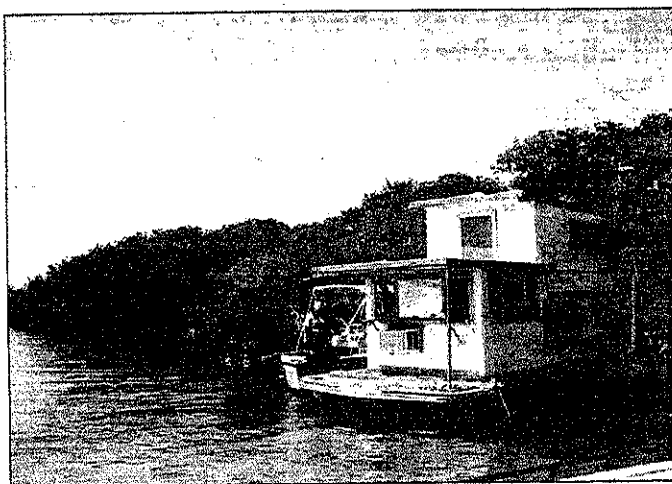
Contributed

Officers taking part in the safety and sanitation operation are briefed prior to going out on the water.



March 19, 2004

REPORTER



Officers check safety equipment and sanitation on a houseboat moored off a mangrove island on the bay side of the Upper Keys.

## Law enforcement targets boating safety, sanitation

### Officers hand out thirteen warnings

Responding to Tavernier area residents who were concerned about boating safety and sanitation, law enforcement officers took to the waters Saturday, Feb. 28.

Officers from the Park Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Sanctuary and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office manned seven boats and contacted boaters to check for violations and to hand out educational material.

When the operation was over, they had contacted 70 boats between Jewfish Creek and Tavernier Creek, on both the ocean side and bay side of the Upper Keys.

"Our goal was to let people know what the law says about safety and sanitation," said Monroe County Sheriff's Sgt. Lou Caputo.

"We asked each boater if we could board the vessel and check it. Everyone we talked with gave us permission to

board.

"Once on board, we checked all their safety equipment and checked to make sure sanitation equipment was properly installed and operating," he said.

The group handed out 13 warnings and 11 citations. One person was arrested and charged with boating under the influence of alcohol.

The citations were almost exclusively handed out to boats that were pumping waste directly into the water without any sanitation equipment at all, spokesmen said.

All the boats were given a packet of information in a waterproof bag.

Caputo said that this type of operation would take place regularly.

"We need to let people know that we expect them to follow the rules, when it comes to safe and clean boating," he said.

"All of our agencies consider this to be a priority, and we'll be working together to make sure the public knows it is a priority as well."

# Deputy seeks sewage pump-out service for Key Largo boaters

BY STEVE GIBBS  
Free Press Staff Writer

KEY LARGO — Monroe County Sheriff's Sgt. Lou Caputo says he's trying to make life easier for live-aboard boaters.

While this small group of residents seem to have solved the workforce housing dilemma, many are seen as adding to the nearshore pollution problem.

Caputo is leader of the sheriff's Sector 7, Zone 1 Advisory Committee, a group of citizens and law enforcement officers who have met regularly for the last four years as part of the Smart Cop philosophy.

Caputo points out the long history of boating and live-aboard boaters in the Keys and

the need for pump-out facilities so boaters don't flush raw sewage into local waters.

"Live-aboard sailors are our heritage here. It's part of our history," he said.

"We need to start to provide services."

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Manager Dave Score said he supports

Caputo's efforts and his agency is "very supportive" of a pump-out vessel.

Conscious of more stringent approaches to dealing with live-aboards in other parts of the

Keys, Caputo does not want the wrong message to get out.

"We don't want to be heavy handed with these folks," he said. "We want to provide education and make sure they get their boat heads pumped out properly. The last thing we want to do is run these people off."

"We want to get a pump out boat to service these folks."

Caputo is working on securing a grant so that the county can provide the pump-out service to the 200 or so boats he says are anchored along the shores of Key Largo at any given time.

The problem, he explains, is that folks who live on shore are required to upgrade their waste



Caputo

See SERVICE, page 7

## Service

Continued from page 3

water systems. Centralized treatment systems are coming to the Keys.

But some question why landowners must pay to upgrade wastewater when anchored — or dockside-dwelling — boaters are allowed to toss buckets of waste overboard.

"We want them here, but not at the expense of the quality of life of the people who live on shore," Caputo said. "We're just

trying to provide a service for the live-aboard boaters."

Money is available through the Clean Vessel Act, he says.

George Garrett, director of Monroe County Marine Resources, also serves on the county's Port Authority.

"The county has never wanted to take on this responsibility, but there is no reason why we can't," Garrett said. "I have more than enough money now, but the best approach might be to go after a grant."

He said the Middle and Lower Keys already have three pump-out boats, and that money on

hand is aimed at offsetting costs of existing pump-out facilities.

"There is no issue in getting money there," Garrett said. "I agree we need a pump-out boat in Key Largo. I personally think we owe resources to these people."

"There's an obligation out there. There's a problem and we need to solve it."

Their next step is to present their plan to the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary at 6 p.m. March 29.

"They'll see no resistance from me," Garrett said.

sgibbs@keysnews.com

**John Pennkamp Coral Reef State Park  
PO Box 487  
Key Largo, Florida 33037  
(305) 451-1202**

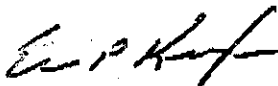
April 21, 2004

Sergeant Lou Caputo  
Monroe County Sheriff's Department  
88770 Overseas Highway  
Key Largo, FL 33037

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to express my strong support of your program to receive discharge from vessels moored in the waters of Monroe County. High water quality is vital to the health of the environment and the economy of Monroe County. As a manager of marine habitat, maintaining high water quality is an area of great concern to me. Anything that can be done to limit the degradation of water quality is well worth doing. I commend you for bringing this issue to the forefront and pursuing the possibility of providing this very important service. John Pennkamp is committed to assisting you in any way possible. This program will be allowed to use the marine pump system at the park marina and will have parking for your boat and trailer free of charge for as long and as often as needed. Thank you for taking the lead in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Eric Kiefer  
Park Manager



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks  
40001 State Road 9336  
Homestead, Florida 33034



In Reply Refer to:

April 5, 2004

A3615

Sgt. Lou Caputo  
Monroe County Sheriff's Office  
Spottswood Station  
88770 Overseas Highway  
Tavernier, FL 33070

Dear Sgt. Caputo:

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend last Monday's meeting of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Sector 7, Zone 1 Citizens Advisory Committee. In attending this meeting, it was obvious to me that the Advisory Committee has been working hard at addressing the issue of live-a-board vessels and their impacts on the quality of near-shore waters in the Upper Keys. As I indicated at the meeting, this issue is of concern to the National Park Service as well given the proximity of Everglades National Park. As you are well aware, protection of the water quality of Florida Bay will require all of us working together!

Since our meeting, I've had a chance to review the excellent informational packet that you are providing out on the water to live-a-board vessels and other boaters in the Upper Keys. This is a great first step, and the National Park Service is very supportive of your efforts in this regard. I also want to indicate to you that the National Park Service is very supportive of the Advisory Committee's efforts to acquire and operate a pump-out-boat as a major step in addressing the wastewater issue associated with live-a-board vessels.

Please keep me apprised of your efforts and developments with respect to this program to protect the water quality of Florida Bay. Hopefully the National Park Service will be able to work with you down the line as you implement this important program.

Sincerely,

Dan B. Kimball  
Acting Superintendent



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**  
**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

April 23, 2004

Mr. Jim Roberts  
Monroe County Manager  
1100 Simonton Street  
Key West, FL 33040

Dear Mr. Roberts

At their meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2004, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council passed a resolution in support of Sergeant Lou Caputo's proposal at the meeting for a pump out vessel and support facilities in the Upper Keys region.

Near shore water quality issues are of great importance both to the Advisory Council and Sanctuary managers, and we applaud the effort made by the Sheriff's department and Citizen's Advisory Council to address this problem in collaboration with Everglades National Park and John Pennekamp State Park.

Yours sincerely

Billy D. Causey  
Superintendent

**DRAFT**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**  
**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**April 20, 2004**  
**Marathon Garden Club**

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council requests that Sanctuary managers convey to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) a resolution of support to the BOCC urging their support for Monroe County Sheriff's Department Sector 7 Zone 1 Citizens Advisory Council proposal to establish pump out facilities and financial support for sustaining ongoing operation of pump out services in State of Florida waters in the Upper Keys region.

# BANKERS MORTGAGE CORPORATION

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OFFICE:

300 Atlantic Drive  
Suite 10  
Key Largo, Florida 33037  
(305) 451-5880

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 3006  
Key Largo, Florida 33037

March 3, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

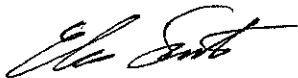
As a local resident and business owner, I fully support Sergeant Lou Caupito and Sector 7, Zone 1 Advisory council in their efforts to provide a pump out boat for the upper keys.

This service is badly needed to maintain the water quality of this area as well as the quality of life to the residents of the upper keys.

I am willing to provide dockage, pump out access, water and electric as needed at my property in Key Largo, Bayside.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Chris Sante

# Key Largo federation backs pump-out boat program

BY STEVE GIBBS  
Free Press Staff Writer

KEY LARGO — The Key Largo Federation of Homeowner Associations voted unanimously last Wednesday to support setting up a pump-out boat that would charge \$5 to empty a vessel's wastewater holding tanks.

Monroe County Sheriff's Sgt. Lou Caputo told federation members that at any given time during the winter there are 300 boats anchored offshore or berthed in marinas in Key Largo.

"The great majority of boaters want to do the right thing, but there are very few pump-out stations here," he said. "The Clean Vessel Act facilitates pump-out boats. One-hundred percent of the cost of a [pump-out] boat is paid for."

The problem, Caputo said, is paying a captain and the cost of fuel and maintenance for a pump-out vessel.

"I'm here to ask for your support," he said. "We need the local community to support this."

Caputo said the county has been putting in mooring fields, and the plan is to collect a small fee from boaters who tie off. A \$5

fee is the legal limit as to the amount that can be collected from a boater, although the cost averages \$25 per pump-out, he said.

"In Boot Key they have a pump-out boat and they are pumping out 16,000 gallons a month there," Caputo said. "They come around twice a week."

Caputo said there is a movement to pass new laws to make people tie off to mooring buoys. He explained that the fees charged to boaters are purposely low to encourage even the least affluent to participate in the program.

Caputo identified the anchorage off Rock Harbor, Sunset Cove and behind Mangrove Marina on the bayside in Tavernier as the major local anchorages.

The pump-out boat would service yachters from Tavernier Creek to Jewfish Creek, excluding Ocean Reef Club.

The federation voted to endorse a resolution drawn up by its president, Glen Patton, that would support the establishment of an Upper Keys wastewater pump-out boat program.

## Boat restrictions?

Also at the meeting, Fred Nickerson, a Fort Largo resident who has been trying for years to get the county to adopt an ordinance restricting the size of vessels using the man-made canals, said now is a good time for him to return to advocate for a big boat ordinance.

The federation member balked.

"We need to talk about the elimination of the canal," said Jo Hammerstrom. "What you really want to do is restrict the no boat rule. I guarantee you you'll end up with restrictions on the canal. They'll back off the harbor boat."

Nickerson responded, "I'm not sure if it's a cause or a symptom. I'm not sure if it's a cause or a symptom. I'm not sure if it's a cause or a symptom."

Chris Gardner asked, "What's the cause? Is it the lack of a pump-out boat? Is it the lack of a pump-out boat? Is it the lack of a pump-out boat?"

Patton suggested that a resolution would be adopted, because there has been a record two years before endorsing just such an ordinance.

Jeff Smith found himself without specifying length. From the Jan. 30, 2002 meeting, there was a show of hands in favor of the federation and the motion was tabled. endorsed by the finance sgibbs@keysnews.com

FREE PRESS, 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,'  
P.O. BOX 469, ISLAMORADA, FL 33036  
45 - Free Press (w) - April 21, 2004

## A good idea

I read with interest the article by Steve Gibbs regarding the proposal by the Key Largo Federation of Homeowner Associations to endorse the setting up of a pump-out boat for the Upper Keys.

On several occasions, in private discussions, I have advocated a pump-out boat. In fact, a pump-out boat is the only workable answer to boat pollution. There are several areas in the Upper Keys where fecal material can be found floating ashore. There is no other viable solution when many of the boats that are moored do not even have engines to get to one of the few pump-out stations. My experience had been that out laws are impossible to enforce since the offender must be caught in the act. ...

I believe that the boaters want to comply but under present conditions it is not possible. A pump-out boat makes compliance easy and inexpensive to the boater with minimum cost to the taxpayer. I hope the community at large will see the advantage to pursuing this goal.

Kenneth J. Korshin, Key Largo



**ISLAND OF KEY LARGO FEDERATION OF HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS, INC.**  
**PO BOX 702**

**KEY LARGO, FL 33037**

<http://www.innovative-dynamics.com/IKLFHA/>

BUTTONWOOD BAY, CAPT JAX, CORAL COAST, CALUSA CAMPGROUND, GATEWAY-TO-THE-SEA, GULFSTREAM SHORES, HAMMER POINT, HARBOR SHORES, HARRY HARRIS PARK, HIBISCUS PARK, KEY LARGO VILLAGE, KNOWLSON COLONY, LARGO SOUND VILLAGE, OCEAN ISLE ESTATES, PORT LARGO, ROCK HARBOR CLUB, ROCK HARBOR ESTATES, SEXTON COVE, SILVER SHORES, SOUTH CREEK VILLAGE, STILLWRIGHT POINT, TAVERNIER OCEAN SHORES, TAYLOR CREEK VILLAGE, WYNKEN, BLYNKEN & NOD

**IKLFHA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP**  
**UPPER KEYS WASTEWATER PUMP OUT BOAT PROGRAM RESOLUTION**

April 28, 2004

Mayor M. Nelson  
District 5 - Monroe County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Dameron Building, Suite II  
99198 Overseas Highway  
Key Largo, FL 33037

At the April 14, 2004, General membership meeting of the Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowners Associations passed the following resolution;

*The Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowners Associations fully supports the establishment of an Upper Keys Wastewater Pump Out Boat Program.*

The Federation realizes that establishing an Upper Keys Wastewater Pump Out Boat Program will not be an easy task. However, the protection of our near shore waters is vitally important to the welfare of the Monroe County.

Sincerely,

*Glenn Patton*

Glenn Patton, President  
Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowner Associations

Cc  
Monroe County Commissioners  
Key Largo Wastewater Board

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead*

**Roland T. Muench**  
**1001 Dove Road**  
**Key Largo, FL 33037**

Sheriff Rick Roth  
Monroe County Sheriff's Office  
5525 College Road  
Key West, FL 33040

April 14, 2004

Dear Sheriff Roth,

We have followed with great interest the idea of acquiring a county sponsored pump-out boat to serve local live-aboard vessels anchored offshore along the island of Key Largo. We wholeheartedly support this initiative, a direct result of the Smart Cop program that has been active thanks to the efforts of Sgt. Lou Caputo here in Key Largo and Tavernier.

You are to be congratulated on the success of the Smart Cop program which represents an excellent example of productive cooperation between government agencies and local residents in an advisory capacity.

Currently serving as president of the Lime Grove Estates Homeowners' Association, I am acutely aware of the many challenges to our quality of life. We are dependent on safe and clean waters surrounding our islands. Because of the county's unique geography, it is sometimes easy for residents of the Upper Keys to feel "abandoned" by their county government which is seated a hundred miles away in Key West. It is therefore reassuring to see agencies come together locally to help resolve ongoing problems of the Upper Keys as is the case with this initiative. Clearly, the Smart Cop program brings your department closer to the community it serves. I have enclosed an example of the positive press coverage this has recently received.

Your department can be as proud as we are of Sgt. Lou Caputo and his efforts to go the extra mile to make this a better and safer community.

Sincerely,



Roland. Muench

cc: Capt. Jenny Bell-Thomson  
Sgt. Lou Caputo

Enclosure: "Free Press" Article, Wed. April 7, 2004

## **Pump-out service supporters**

At a recent Key Largo Trailer Village Community Crimewatch meeting, Sgt. Lou Caputo discussed the Monroe County Sheriff's Office efforts to seek a balance in resolving the live-aboard vessel problem that we have in the Upper Keys.

With the tremendous efforts of Mayor Murray Nelson, state Rep. Ken Sorensen and others, Monroe County has finally received state funding to protect our environmentally sensitive lands, support the state's wastewater mandate, and to expand affordable and workforce housing for residents.

The live-aboard vessel problem interrelates with all three of these important Keys

issues. I would like to commend Lou for being proactive to seek a win-win solution for this problem. The pump-out station will allow residents of live-aboard vessels to maintain their lifestyle while protecting our environment.

I encourage all Upper Keys residents to support Lou in his efforts to obtain a grant from the Clean Vessel Act to purchase a pump-out station for the Upper Keys.

**Vicky Fay, Key Largo Trailer Village**

...

As a community that is directly affected by live-aboard and transient vessels without

proper sanitation devices, we support the efforts of Sgt. L. Caputo and his advisory board in dealing with the problem of vessels discharging sewage directly into our waters in the Upper Keys. Members of our community have witnessed the actual discharge of human waste from some of the vessels. ...

An obvious solution is to provide a pump-out boat service to our live-aboard and transient vessels to ensure the future health of our waters. We urge the county to use the available funds from the Clean Vessel Act to purchase and operate a pump-out vessel in the Upper Keys.

**Michael Holler, president, Pirates Cove board of directors, Key Largo**

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SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: FREE PRESS, 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,' P.O. BOX 469, ISLAMORADA, FL 33036

## Let's spread around the cost of pump-outs

**EDITOR:**

On Feb. 28, officers from a number of government agencies checked boats from Tavernier Creek to Jewfish Creek on the oceanside and bayside for compliance with safety and sanitation (holding tank) regulations. Warnings and citations were issued, including an oddly Keys-like BUI (boating under the influence) charge at noon on a Saturday.

There is a balance between the needs of the land-bound Keys community and those of our liveaboard citizens. Recent changes in the law make it a legal requirement for most boaters to have holding tanks and to pump them out, but the lack of pumpout facilities on land, or better yet, on boats, have made compliance a Catch 22 situation for the less mobile of the liveaboard vessels.

As a shoreline resident of Key Largo on Sunset Cove, which has a large liveaboard community, I applaud these steps to ensure cleaner water and safer living for all. As a part-time cruiser and liveaboard in other parts of the world over the years, I am concerned that we make it possible, or better yet easy, to comply.

For those who demand instant compliance, I ask you to imagine having to drag your septic system around the island to a pumpout at

or Pennkamp when the tank is full. It's not a walk in the park. Let's not even mention how much bigger the load of pollutants that Big Sugar sends our way is in comparison. For those who don't want to comply and use holding tanks, try to feel a little for your shorebound neighbors. You will never get that image out of their heads of toilet paper on the beach, no matter how unlikely it truly is. A holding tank can be added to an existing marine head for around \$250, or from scratch for less than \$400, and that's for citizens unburdened by property taxes, so let's call it even.

## ENFORCING LIVEBOARD SANITATION LAWS IS GOOD START

On Saturday, Feb. 28, officers from a number of government agencies, including the FWC, DEP and sheriff's office, checked boats from Tavernier Creek to Jewfish Creek on oceanside and bayside for compliance with safety and sanitation (holding tank) regulations. Warnings and citations were issued, including an oddly Keys-like BUI (boating under the influence) issued at noon on a Saturday. (Was it a hangover or an early start?)

There is a balance to be found between the needs of the land-bound Keys community and those of our liveaboard citizens. Recent changes in the law make it a legal requirement for most boaters to have holding tanks and to pump them out, but the lack of pumpout facilities on land, or better yet, on boats, have made compliance a Catch 22 situation for the less mobile of the liveaboard vessels.

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Jeff Osborn  
Key Largo

## Balancing needs

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There is a balance to be found between the needs of the land-bound community and those of our liveaboard citizens.

Changes in the law make it

erty taxes, so let's call it even.

Anyway, after all is said and done, it's good to see that local officials are taking the new and tougher measures into account and yet doing it without a heavy hand. (If anyone who was boarded has a different story, let's make sure we hear it.)

This seems like a great example of community policing and cooperation between citizens and the people who serve them.

In other

actions have led to hostility everyone

for a city - if its part, the old, too.

Jeff Osborn  
Key Largo

Mandalay or Pennkamp when the tank is full. It's not a walk in the park. Let's not even mention how much bigger the load of pollutants that Big Sugar sends our way is in comparison.

For those who don't want to comply and use holding tanks, try to feel a little for your shorebound neighbors. You will never get that image out of their heads of toilet paper on the beach, no matter how unlikely it truly is. A holding tank can be added to an existing marine head for around \$250, or from scratch for less than \$400, and that's for citizens unburdened by property taxes, so let's call it even.

Anyway, after all is said and done, it's good to see that local officials are taking the new and tougher measures into account, and yet doing it without a heavy hand. This seems like a great example of community policing and cooperation between citizens and the people who serve them. In other places, similar actions have been much rougher, and lead to hostility rather than solutions that everyone can agree on. There is apparently money for a pumpout boat and shore facility. If the government kicks in for its part, the liveaboard community should too.



Mon, Apr 26, 2004 11:56 AM

**From:** John Hammerstrom <johnhammer@bellsouth.net>  
**To:** Rick Roth <rickroth@keysso.net>  
**Cc:** Jenny Bell-Thomson <jbthomson@keysso.net>  
**Bcc:** Lou Caputo <pucanbear@aol.com>  
**Date:** Thursday, April 15, 2004 4:04 PM  
**Subject:** Sergeant Caputo's community efforts

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Dear Rick and Jenny,

We appreciate the community involvement of Sergeant Caputo. Regarding the "pump out" issue, he has seen a problem and has contributed a lot of his personal time to help solve it. We could use more of that around here.

It seems to me that he is also solving a law-enforcement issue at the same time. With the law on the books, but no way for boaters to "do the right thing," it has been impossible and impractical for the different agencies to do their part to enforce the "no discharge" laws.

Sergeant Caputo's efforts help the community by solving a water quality problem, by working to provide a much-needed service that works to that end, and by making it possible for the other law enforcement agencies to do their part.

In any case, Sergeant Caputo is a terrific ambassador for your office, and his work on this and other community issues is appreciated.

As his supervisors, please accept my thanks for your positive contribution to the effort.

The email that I sent to the County Commissioners is below.

Sincerely,

John Hammerstrom  
Key Largo

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**From:** John Hammerstrom <johnhammer@bellsouth.net>  
**Date:** Wed, 31 Mar 2004 14:37:10 -0400  
**To:** BOCC  
**Subject:** Pump Out

Dear Commissioners,



Mon, Apr 26, 2004 11:56 AM

Although this is not yet an agenda item, the matter of boat pump out facilities is a very real problem and I hope you will act favorably on this issue when it comes before you.

At a time when we are spending millions of dollars on land-based wastewater facilities, it is particularly timely that the opportunity presents itself to improve our water quality by addressing the boat wastewater problem.

Sergeant Caputo is leading the way to make boat pump out a reality. While it is law, most live-aboard boat owners have no way to comply with the regulation. This well-thought-out proposal should be endorsed enthusiastically and implemented as soon as practical.

Sincerely,

John Hammerstrom